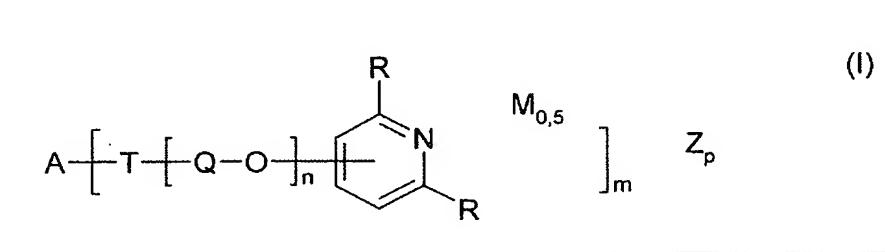


**AS ENCLOSED TO IPER**

**We claim:**

1. A polymer of transition-metal-bridged units of the formula (I)



where

A is an m-valent organic radical,

T independently of one another are O or NH,

Q independently of one another are  $\text{CHR}^1\text{-CH}_2$  where  $\text{R}^1$  is H or optionally substituted C<sub>1-6</sub>-alkyl,

R independently of one another are H, 2-pyridyl, 2-imidazolinyl, 2-imidazolyl, 2-thiazolinyl, 2-thiazolyl, 2-pyridazyl, 2-pyrimidyl, carboxyl, carboxylic ester radical, carboxamide radical, carboxylate, phosphonate, where at least one of the radicals R is different from H,

M is  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ru}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Os}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,

Z is  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ ,  $\text{CH}_3\text{OO}^-$ ,  $\text{BF}_4^-$ ,  $\text{SF}_6^-$ ,  $\text{Cl}^-$ ,  $\Gamma$ ,  $\text{PF}_6^-$ , perchlorate,

n is 1 to 10 000,

m is 2 to 100,

p is a number which corresponds to the charge balance within the polymer,

where the average molecular weight of the polymer is at least 30 000.

2. A polymer as claimed in claim 1, wherein A is derived from polyols, polyamines, polyalkanolamines, polyethyleneimines, polyvinylamine and alkoxylates thereof.
3. A polymer as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein R is in each case 2-pyridyl.
4. A polymer as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein Q is  $\text{CHR}^1\text{-CH}_2$  where  $\text{R}^1$  is H or methyl.
5. A process for the preparation of polymers as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, which comprises introducing non-transition-metal-bridged units of the formula (I), whose charge is balanced by counterions Z, into a solvent, and then reacting them with salts of the metals M with mixing, where the rate of addition of the metal salts is at least 1 mol/s.
6. A process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the concentration of the units of the formula (I) in the solvent prior to the reaction with the metal salts is at least 3% by weight, based on the total solution.
7. The use of polymers as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4 for increasing the viscosity of liquids.
8. The use as claimed in claim 7 for simultaneously imparting color to the liquid.
9. The use of polymers as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4 as switchable gelling agents in which the viscosity can be controlled through the addition of complexing agents for the metals M.